

# WORKFORCE OBSERVATIONS

## FOR SOUTH CENTRAL WISCONSIN COUNTIES

May 2004



State of Wisconsin  
Department of Workforce Development  
Office of Economic Advisors

### Unemployment rates drop, in some cases below typical April levels

In April, **Columbia County** saw its unemployment rate drop roughly 1 percent the typical April rate. (See graph below.) This is the most encouraging rate the county has posted in the last year. As in much of South Central Wisconsin, the pickup in the construction sector followed last spring's trend. The retail & wholesale trade sector remains slightly above year-ago levels, but this spring's pickup is not as sharp as last spring's. After posting several months of estimates below year-ago levels, April is the third month the information, professional, business & other services sector has shown positive change over the same month in the previous year.

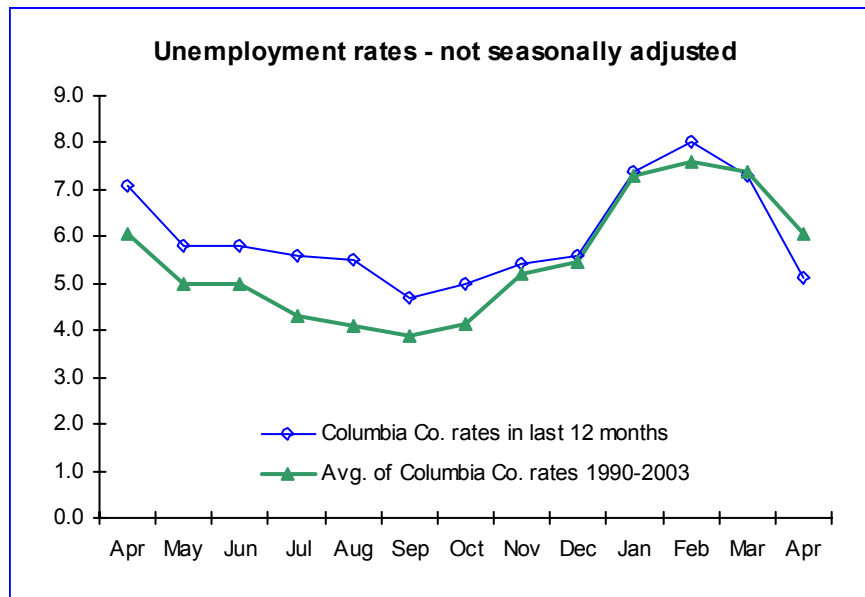
From August 2003 to March 2004, **Dane County's** unemployment rate had been about 0.6 to 0.8 percent above typical monthly levels. April's rate was just 0.5 percent above typical.

(See graph on page 2.) At just 2.5 percent, the rate is still exceptionally low in absolute terms and is the lowest of any Wisconsin county. In the leisure & hospitality sector, employment estimates have been fairly consistent since January

2004 (2.5 percent to 2.9 percent or 600 to 700 jobs above year-ago levels). The April jump in professional & business services largely compensates for a January drop of similar magnitude and brings professional & business services above year-ago levels for the first time in over twelve months.

At 0.5 percent above its typical unemployment rate, **Dodge County** is closer to normal than it has been in the

last year. The construction industry seems to be following last year's trends fairly closely, although still slightly below last year's levels. The retail & wholesale trade sector saw a much larger March-to-April employment increase this year than last. Some of this increase might be hiring that showed up last year in May instead of April. Spring and summer are volatile for this sector, so a few



more months of data will tell a much more complete story. The same is true of the leisure & hospitality sector.

For much of the last year, **Jefferson County** has seen unemployment rates about 0.7 percent to 1.1 percent above

### Labor force estimates - not seasonally adjusted

	Wisconsin			South Central			Columbia			Dane		
	Apr 2004	1-month change	1-year change	Apr 2004	1-month change	1-year change	Apr 2004	1-month change	1-year change	Apr 2004	1-month change	1-year change
Civilian Labor Force**	3,082,900	-9,380	29,300	450,100	-300	3,100	28,400	-200	30	288,200	380	3,600
Employed	2,925,200	24,300	61,100	434,900	4,200	6,600	27,000	470	610	281,100	2,300	4,900
Unemployed	157,700	-33,710	-31,860	15,100	-4,510	-3,450	1,440	-670	-580	7,100	-1,960	-1,330
Unemployment rate (%)	5.1	-1.1	-1.1	3.4	-1.0	-0.8	5.1	-2.2	-2.0	2.5	-0.6	-0.5
	Dodge			Jefferson			Marquette			Sauk		
	Apr 2004	1-month change	1-year change	Apr 2004	1-month change	1-year change	Apr 2004	1-month change	1-year change	Apr 2004	1-month change	1-year change
Civilian Labor Force**	47,500	-210	100	42,300	-40	-590	7,000	-160	-80	36,600	-80	80
Employed	45,100	490	750	40,200	360	-430	6,500	110	150	35,100	440	580
Unemployed	2,400	-690	-650	2,200	-400	-150	500	-270	-230	1,520	-520	-510
Unemployment rate (%)	5.1	-1.4	-1.4	5.1	-1.0	-0.3	7.2	-3.6	-3.2	4.1	-1.5	-1.4

\*\* Includes labor force participants residing in area. Estimates are **NOT** seasonally adjusted. Current month estimates are preliminary and subject to revision. Numbers 2,000 and greater are rounded to nearest 100. Numbers under 2,000 are rounded to nearest 10. Sub-units may not add to totals due to rounding. Calculations are based on unrounded numbers. Results are rounded. For more information call (608) 242-4885 or email dan.barroilhet@dwd.state.wi.us.

typical levels. Against that background, February and March rates (1.5 percent above typical and 1.3 percent above typical) were somewhat more worrying and the April rate (0.9 percent above typical) seems almost reassuring. Apart from not dipping so low as 2003 in January and February, the leisure & hospitality sector seems to be keeping pace with last year's trends. Similarly, the information, professional, business & other services sector did not dip as low this winter as last and seems to enjoy stronger spring growth this year than last. Once again, more months of data will tell us to what extent this is simply the same hiring showing up earlier and to what extent it reflects lasting employment growth in the sector.

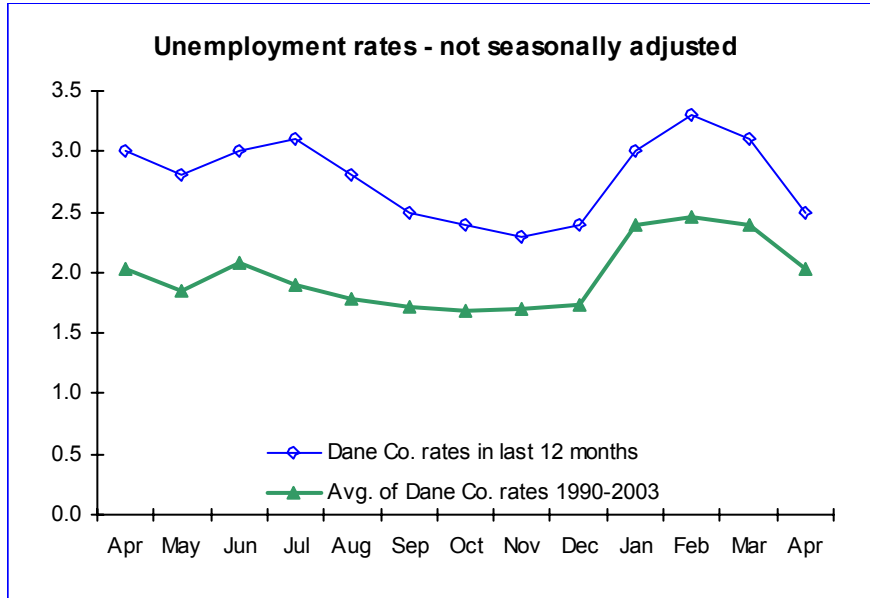
In the last year, **Marquette County** had unemployment rates roughly 1.5 percent to 1.8 percent above typical for six months and went below this range only in January, March and April.

The April rate was 0.9 percent below typical and seems more encouraging than the employment-by-industry estimates that indicate. From April 2003 to February 2004, construction had been well above year-ago levels, but this

April's gain was smaller than last April's. Except for a milder winter contraction, leisure & hospitality figures seem to follow year-ago trends.

At 0.8 percent below the typical April level, **Sauk County's** unemployment rate is as rosy as any it has seen in the last year. Except for October through December 2003, the information, professional, business & other services sector

has been below year-ago levels for the last twelve months. Apart from a soft winter, the leisure & hospitality sector seems to be following last year's seasonal pattern.



### Employment by industry estimates - not seasonally adjusted

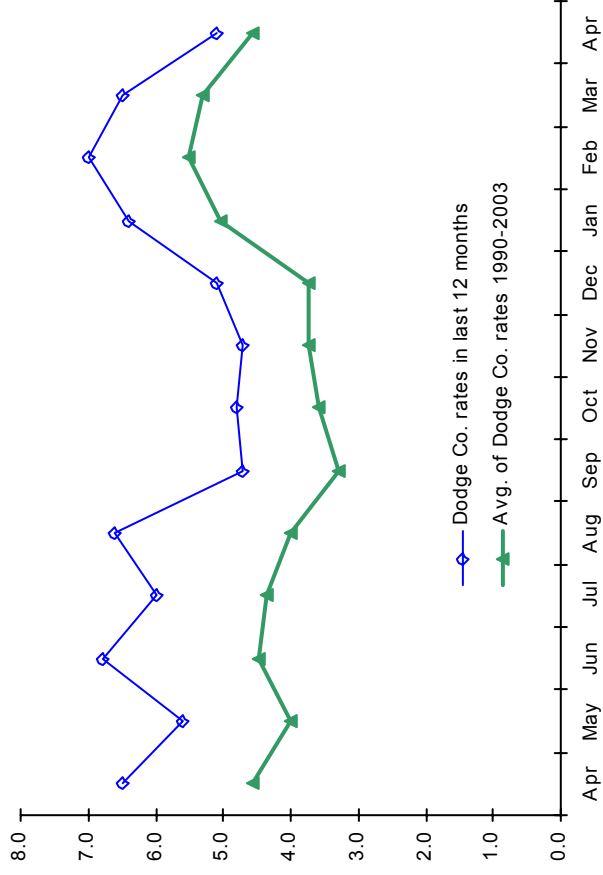
	Wisconsin			South Central			Columbia			Dane		
	Apr 2004	1-month change	1-year change	Apr 2004	1-month change	1-year change	Apr 2004	1-month change	1-year change	Apr 2004	1-month change	1-year change
Total jobs, all indstries*	2,799,700	39,600	38,100	426,400	6,000	1,160	20,500	300	130	298,000	4,100	1,300
Const., min'g & nat. resources	125,000	8,400	5,400	20,900	1,730	620	1,110	80	60	14,300	1,100	400
Manufacturing	502,600	3,700	-1,300	57,600	-170	-1,780	4,700	10	-110	26,600	-100	-500
Trade (w wholesale & retail)	434,900	5,400	11,700	61,600	10	170	3,500	90	60	41,100	-400	0
Transport, Wrhsing, Utilities	105,300	600	0	10,500	30	-440	690	-20	-40	6,900	100	1,100
Financial activities	158,600	-500	2,700	30,200	60	1,130	670	-10	70	26,100	100	900
Education & health services	375,000	800	10,700	44,700	240	1,200	2,300	-10	-10	29,900	300	1,000
Leisure & hospitality	243,200	8,500	7,500	39,100	1,130	1,370	2,100	30	120	24,400	500	700
Info, prof, bus. & other srvcs	434,100	10,100	9,000	66,300	1,620	690	1,630	40	60	52,800	1,400	500
Government	421,000	2,600	-7,600	95,600	1,350	-1,800	3,900	70	-90	75,900	1,200	-1,400

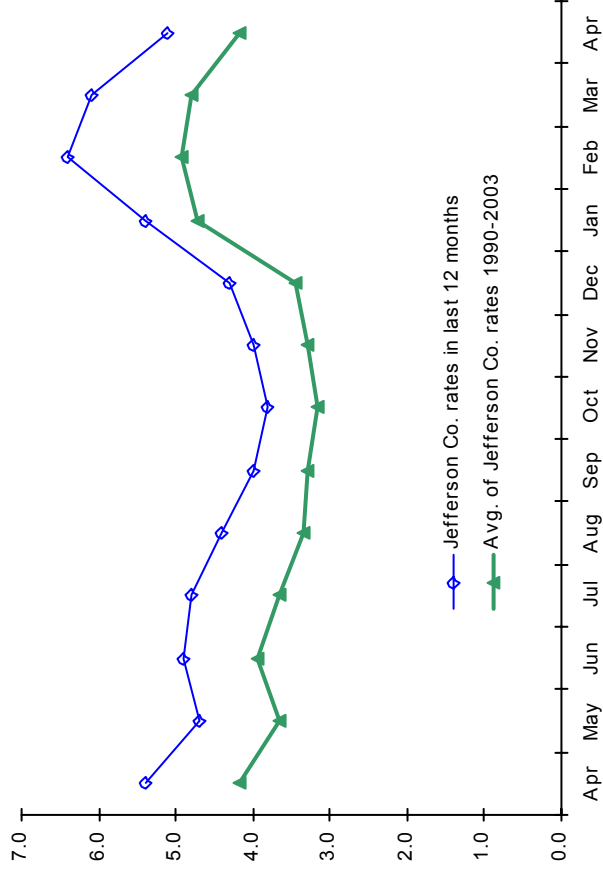
	Dodge			Jefferson			Marquette			Sauk		
	Apr 2004	1-month change	1-year change	Apr 2004	1-month change	1-year change	Apr 2004	1-month change	1-year change	Apr 2004	1-month change	1-year change
Total jobs, all indstries*	33,600	440	20	34,900	440	-460	3,900	190	70	35,400	540	100
Const., min'g & nat. resources	1,990	190	-20	1,280	130	90	200	60	-40	2,000	170	130
Manufacturing	9,900	-50	-380	8,800	-80	-850	1,230	20	20	6,400	30	40
Trade (w wholesale & retail)	4,100	150	130	6,000	140	30	460	20	10	6,500	10	-60
Transport, Wrhsing, Utilities	990	10	0	1,220	20	-40	50	0	0	660	30	-60
Financial activities	840	10	0	950	10	40	150	-10	10	1,470	-50	110
Education & health services	4,300	-20	190	4,500	-40	-40	290	0	0	3,300	10	60
Leisure & hospitality	2,400	160	170	3,200	170	220	410	40	20	6,600	230	130
Info, prof, bus. & other srvcs	3,500	-80	0	4,900	160	270	230	10	10	3,200	90	-160
Government	5,500	60	-80	4,100	-60	-170	890	50	40	5,300	30	-110

\*Includes jobs with employers in area. Estimates are NOT seasonally adjusted. Current month estimates are preliminary and subject to revision. Numbers 2,000 and greater are rounded to nearest 100. Numbers under 2,000 are rounded to nearest 10. Sub-units may not add to totals due to rounding. Calculations are based on unrounded numbers. Results are rounded. For more information call (608) 242-4885 or email dan.barroilhet@dwd.state.wi.us.

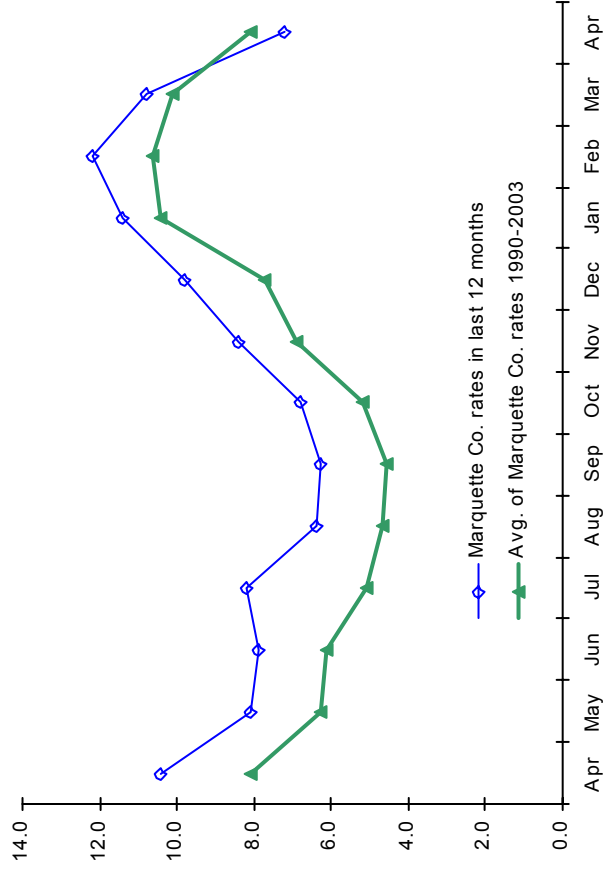
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